

REMARKS

Claims 60-65, 67-69, 134-145 are pending in the present application. In the Office Action dated September 22, 2006, the Examiner has allowed claims 60-65, 67-69, and 134. Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the allowance of these claims.

Claims 135-138, 140, 141, 144 and 145 remain rejected based on Herrington (US 5,088,971) in view of Kendall (WO 98/16430), Howard (US 3,986,914) and Smith et al. (US 4976673). Further, claim 139 remains rejected over the references applied to claim 138 and further in view of Bennett et al. (US 4,507,535). Claim 142 remains rejected over the references applied to claim 141 and further in view of Andreoli et al. (US 5,225,649). Claim 143 remains rejected over the references applied to claim 137 and further in view of Kurihara et al. (US 5,382,773).

Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections. However, in the interest of expediting prosecution of this matter, claims 135-145 are hereby canceled without prejudice. Applicant reserves the option to further prosecute claims directed to the same or similar subject matter in a separate patent application. Applicant thus respectfully requests that this Amendment After Final be entered by the Examiner in order to place the application in better form for allowance or appeal, if necessary.

The amendments and cancellation of the claims above is being made solely to expedite prosecution of the present application and do not constitute an acquiescence to any reference identified by the Examiner. Applicant submits that these amendments to the claims overcome the rejection set forth in the previous Office Action. Therefore, Applicant believes this patent application is now in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests a timely notice of allowance.

CONCLUSION

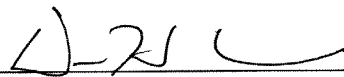
Applicant submits that this Amendment After Final and the accompanying remarks do not raise new issues for consideration or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner. This Amendment After Final should therefore allow for immediate action and allowance by the Examiner.

Applicant also submits that entry of this Amendment After Final and the accompanying remarks would place the present application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of any of the pending claims. Favorable consideration and timely allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Applicant authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees and/or credit any overpayments associated with this paper to Baker Botts L.L.P. Deposit Account No. 02-4377, Ref. No. 077409.0389. Further, if a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not provided for above, Applicant requests such extension and authorizes the charging of the extension fee to Baker Botts L.L.P. Deposit Account No. 02-4377, Ref. No. 077409.0389.

Respectfully submitted,

12/6/06
Date


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